

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9053

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, MX

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING OF AMERICAN EXPRESS EXECUTIVE JAIME
MAZAL KAMI

1. ON SATURDAY, JULY 19, AT ABOUT 11:15, FIVE ARMED MEN
KIDNAPPED MR. JAIME MAZAL KAMI, THE ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER
OF THE AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY IN MEXICO, AS HE WAS
ARRIVING AT HIS HOME. HIS CAPTORS FLED WITH THEIR HOSTAGE
IN A TAXI AND VOLKSWAGON WHICH BOTH HAD BEEN REPORTED
STOLEN ON JULY 18.

2. SHORTLY AFTER MAZAL'S ABDUCTION (BY SOME ACCOUNTS WITHIN
15 MINUTES), HIS KIDNAPPERS TELEPHONED HIS WIFE, MRS.
PATRICIA POPE MAZAL, AND DEMANDED A RANSOM OF TWO MILLION
PESOS US DOLS 160,000) IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RELEASE OF
MAZAL. DURING THE COURSE OF THE NIGHT, MRS. MAZAL WHO WAS
JOINED BY HER BROTHER-IN-LAW, CARLOS MAZAL, RECEIVED TWO OR
MORE ADDITIONAL TELEPHONE CALLS FROM THE KIDNAPPERS IN WHICH
THEY ADMONISHED THE MAZALS NOT TO NOTIFY THE POLICE AND
REFUSED TO ACCEPT CARLOS' OFFER OF A ONE-MILLION PESO
RANSOM, SAYING THAT THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPTA "CENTAVO"
LESS THAN THE TWO MILLION DEMANDED. AFTER SOME INITIAL
INTRASIGENCE, THE KIDNAPPERS QUICKLY REVERSED THEM-
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SELVES AND ACCEPTED CARLOS MAZAL'S OFFER OF ONE MILLION

PESOS. CARLOS DELIVERED THE RANSOM IN A SMALL WHITE SUITCASE TO A LOCATION DESIGNATED BY THE KIDNAPPERS IN THE HEART OF MEXICO CITY AT ABOUT 2:30 AM JULY 21 AND JAIME WAS RELEASED WITHIN A HALF HOUR ON A CITY STREET A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY. DURING 27 HOURS OF CAPTIVITY, JAIME WAS MISTREATED AND SUFFERED MINOR INJURIES FROM BEING KICKED AND STRUCK BY THE KIDNAPPERS.

3. ALTHOUGH THE KIDNAPPERS CLAIMED TO BE MEMBERS OF THE 23RD OF SEPTEMBER MOVEMENT, LOCAL AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY CRIMINALS ATTEMPTING TO THROW THE POLICE OFF THE TRACK WITH A FEW RATHER UNCONVINCING REFERENCES TO "THE CAUSE".

4. THE KIDNAPPERS APPARENTLY SELECTED JAIME MAZAL AS THEIR VICTIM BECAUSE HE LIVES IN A LARGE HOUSE IN A WELL-TO-DO SECTION OF MEXICO CITY (THE SAME SECTION WHERE ABOUT HALF OF THE EMBASSY FAMILIES LIVE AS DO A LARGE NUMBER OF US AND MEXICAN BUSINESSMEN AND PROFESSIONALS). THE KIDNAPPERS DIRECTED THEIR DEMANDS TO MAZAL'S IMMEDIATE RELATIVES RATHER THAN AMERICAN EXPRESS AND THERE IS NO INDICATION THEY WERE AWARE HE HELD AN EXECUTIVE POSITION IN A US COMPANY. PRESS ACCOUNTS, HOWEVER, INDICATE THAT AMERICAN EXPRESS PAID THE RANSOM, A FACT WHICH IS HIGHLY DISTURBING TO COMPANY OFFICIALS.

5. THE KIDNAPPERS CALLED MAZAL "A JEW" DURING HIS CAPTIVITY AND APPEARED TO BE UNAWARE OF HIS CLOSE TIES WITH THE US. JAIME MAZAL'S FATHER WAS BORN IN TURKEY AND A US CITIZEN OF SYRIAN AND LEBANESE EXTRACTION. THE ELDER MAZAL DID NOT RESIDE IN THE US LONG ENOUGH TO TRANSMIT CITIZENSHIP TO HIS SON. JAIME MAZAL' MOTHER WAS BORN IN MEXICO AS WAS JAIME HIMSELF. BOTH ARE MEXICAN CITIZENS. HIS WIFE, NEE PATRICIA POPE, IS A US CITIZEN AS ARE HIS TWO CHILDREN. JAIME MAZAL(AKA JAMES ELIOT MAZAL) HAS MANY AMERICAN FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES AND COULD EASILY BE MISTAKEN FOR AMERICAN HIMSELF. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH FLUENTLY AND WITHOUT AN ACCENT. JOVA

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